

# **Continuation Study of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Student Utilization and Benefit**

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## **Abstract**

**Introduction:** One in five adults struggle with mental illnesses, yet there is still stigmatization towards mental health problems. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a program that was created to help reduce this stigma and to teach the skills needed to provide initial help to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. The purpose of this study is to determine the benefit of MHFA training in pharmacy students by assessing student's utilization and retention of skills over time.

**Methods:** Participants of this study included second-year and third-year pharmacy students at SIUE who received MHFA training during their first-year of pharmacy school and were previously surveyed on utilization. P2 and P3 students were emailed our survey and had 10 days to complete it. We will be comparing the results between the two classes, and well as with the results from the previous year's study. IRB approval was granted with protocol number 1376.

**Results:** Our survey received a total of 57 responses. The class of 2024 had 15 participants in this study, and the class of 2023 had 42 participants. The results of this study show that overall, students feel confident in using their training skills to intervene in a mental health crisis. Seventy-seven percent of students have already put these skills to use. Students feel less confident when it comes to counseling patients on mental health problems. Eighty-six percent of students feel that adding MHFA refreshers to the curriculum would be beneficial.

**Conclusion:** The results of this study support the need for mandatory MHFA training in pharmacy curriculum. The results also reflect the potential need for the addition of MHFA refreshers.